



## Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

June 24, 2002

In reply refer to: KEC-4

**To: People Interested in the Northeast Oregon Hatchery Program - Grande Ronde and Imnaha Spring Chinook Project**

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has been taking comments from the public on the Grande Ronde – Imnaha Spring Chinook Project for several months. So far, over 250 comments have been received through public meetings, letters, emails and phone calls. Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think and what your concerns are with this hatchery improvement project.

This letter summarizes the key issues that were derived from the many public comments. These issues will be used to customize the environmental analysis of the project so that the things that matter most to the public are studied in appropriate detail before any decision is made whether to implement the project.

**The Proposal: This project is a multi-agency, multi-Tribe partnership to improve hatchery facilities in northeast Oregon so that hatchery operations become more effective at helping the spring chinook salmon (spring chinook are classified as 'threatened' under the Endangered Species Act - ESA). To be able to raise healthy spring chinook smolts near their parents' native streams in sufficient numbers to meet pre-established conservation and recovery goals, BPA and its partners propose:**

- 1) To enhance the Lookingglass Hatchery and the Imnaha Satellite Facility (also known as the Gumboot Facility) within the boundaries of existing development**
- 2) Construction of a new hatchery with fish trapping, breeding, incubation, and rearing facilities; worker housing; and supporting features (water, power, road upgrades) on the Lostine River at the Lundquist property on Granger Road**
- 3) Construction of new rearing facilities, worker housing, and supporting features on the Imnaha River at the Marks Ranch**

## **The Key Public Issues:**

### **Biological Environment:**

- **Effects to ESA-protected fish species, and other aquatic species, due to facility construction, modification, or operation**
- **Effects to wildlife, particularly ESA-protected species and big game (elk and deer), where cover or breeding habitat, migration routes, or traditional access to water may be affected by new facilities (Lostine and Imnaha/Marks Ranch sites)**
- **Effects to plants, particularly ESA-protected species and riparian plant communities, due to ground disturbance, spread of weeds, landscaping, or changes to ground water or surface water availability**

### **Physical Environment:**

- **Changes by season to in-stream water quantity and ground water table at each site due to use of new diversions of river water and wells to serve the hatchery facilities**
- **Changes to water quality downstream from each site due to construction and operation of new facilities**

### **Social and Economic Environment:**

- **Considerations of Imnaha and Lostine Wild and Scenic River status and Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, particularly whether new facilities may unreasonably diminish remarkable values of these specially designated areas**
- **Aesthetics and noise associated with non-residential facilities in the Lostine/Granger Road neighborhood and at the Imnaha sites**
- **Effects of construction and operation of the new facilities on health, safety and security of nearby residents and road-users**
- **Cost versus benefits of the facilities overall and in context of other means for rescuing spring chinook populations in northeast Oregon and throughout their range**

The environmental analysis addressing these issues will be available for public review and comment as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in late 2002. The Draft EIS will also include analysis of other issues typically identified as important by federal, state and tribal managers or required by certain laws (land use and zoning, civil rights, cultural resources, unique soils and geologic features, cumulative impacts, etc.). Public meetings will be held to discuss the

Draft EIS before a Final EIS is published and a decision whether to proceed with the project is announced.

This analysis will be limited to studying the effects of building and operating the facilities at the proposed sites or continuing to use the existing hatchery facilities to achieve the same programmatic goals. That is, since this project involves no change to pre-established programmatic goals, direction, production levels, or approved means of achieving programmatic goals, consideration of issues concerning programmatic elements is outside the scope of this particular analysis. The forum for discussions of issues with spring chinook recovery programs, hatcheries in general, or priorities for funding different means for helping fish recovery, et cetera, is during reconsideration of programmatic plans like those tied to the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan, the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program and other broader scale guidance.

#### **For More Information**

If you have any questions, or think you may have more to add to this list of issues to analyze in the Grande Ronde – Imnaha Spring Chinook Project Draft EIS, please call my direct number 503-230-5885, or send me an e-mail at [macarter@bpa.gov](mailto:macarter@bpa.gov). You may also contact Becky Ashe, Project Leader for the Nez Perce Tribe, at 208-843-7320, ext. 2433, or send e-mail to [beckya@nezperce.org](mailto:beckya@nezperce.org). Or, watch the following website for project updates as they happen:

<http://www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/PSA/NEPA/SUMMARIES/Granderonde>.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mickey A Carter 6/24/2002

Mickey A. Carter

Environmental Protection Specialist